United Nations A/62/PV.56

General Assembly

Sixty-second session

Official Records

56th plenary meeting
Monday, 26 November 2007, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Kerim ..... (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Organization of work

The President: Before taking up the items on our agenda for today, I would like to inform members that consideration of agenda item 50, "The role of the United Nations in promoting a new global human order", which was scheduled for today, 26 November, has been postponed to a later date to be announced.

Also, I would like to inform members that the reports of the First Committee will be considered on Wednesday afternoon, 5 December.

Agenda item 121

Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly

The President: Today we will consider a subject of great importance to us all, the agenda item on the "Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly". Under this title, our efforts to impart new vigour into this great institution have been ongoing for over 16 years. We now need to ask ourselves what our ultimate objective is. How can we enhance the authority and the efficiency of the Assembly? Our leaders have called for a stronger United Nations. Could we not instead call this exercise: "The role of the General Assembly in strengthening the United Nations system"?

The 2005 World Summit Outcome Document reaffirmed our central position as the chief deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations. It also recognized our role in setting standards and codifying international law. We should strive to live up to this mandate in our everyday work. To promote more effective multilateralism, to find global solutions to global problems, it is incumbent upon all of us to bolster the authority and the international standing of this Assembly.

At the opening of the general debate, two months ago, I suggested that the General Assembly should be more of a dialogue, not a monologue; more focused on substantive results; more engaging and insightful; and exemplify this through greater cooperation and mutual respect. I would like to thank all Member States for delivering on these suggestions through your active contribution and proposals.

Member States are the driving force of our success and I encourage members to take the initiative. It is first and foremost by systematically tackling the challenges that we face together and achieving results that the General Assembly makes itself stronger, more effective and more relevant to the lives of the global public.

In this regard, I would like to thank Kyrgyzstan for bringing forward a draft resolution on social justice, which has been sponsored by over 80 Member States. Additionally, I note the cooperative way the Czech Republic and the Dominican Republic approached elections to the Security Council. I call on all Member States to continue to work together in this manner, enthusiastically and in cooperation, as we have also done on mandate review, so that we can make

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

07-61162 (E)

progress on other important issues, such as climate change, the Millennium Development Goals, and Security Council and management reform.

This means that on system-wide coherence, for example, the practical success of the pilot countries, at the country level, should sway the opinion of the Assembly in New York, rather than the other way around. To give all Member States the opportunity to demonstrate our renewed leadership on priority issues, I shall, inter alia, convene debates on counter-terrorism in December, on climate change in February 2008 and on management reform in April.

As the Charter stipulates, the relationship between the General Assembly and other principal organs must be complementary, not competitive. We must continue to develop our relationship in an open, transparent and cooperative manner to strengthen the Organization and better accomplish our common goals. In this regard, I maintain regular contact with the Secretary-General on substantive issues and supported his request to brief the Assembly on recent developments. I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his support and cooperation.

I have also met periodically with the Presidents of the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, as well as with the chairs of the Main Committees to enhance cooperation and spread best practices. Additionally, I have promoted the Assembly's interaction with civil society and the private sector and our cooperation with parliaments, particularly through the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

Our outreach with these and other important constituencies, including the media, must continue to be developed. Our message must be consistent, compelling and relevant to everyday life and we must resist giving the perception of institutional introspection.

The effectiveness of the presidency, and his or her office, has an important impact on the quality and organization of the General Assembly's work. This is contingent not only on his or her political and diplomatic skills, but also on the support and cooperation of Member States and the Secretariat.

Commensurate with the role envisaged of the presidency in the Charter, the budget of the presidency, including his or her office, should be financed entirely from the regular budget, rather than from the current makeshift arrangements. In addition, and in proportion to the growing responsibilities of the presidency, the Office of the President should be appropriately staffed and properly situated within United Nations Headquarters. That would ensure that each elected President — whether from a developed or developing country, no matter how large or small — has an equal opportunity to deliver results. An entirely United Nations-funded budget would enhance the independence of the presidency and increase transparency and accountability to Member States.

In Assembly resolution 61/292, Member States decided:

> "to establish, at its sixty-second session, an ad hoc working group on the revitalization of the General Assembly, open to all Member States, to evaluate and assess the status of implementation of relevant resolutions, to identify ways to further enhance the role, authority, effectiveness and efficiency of the Assembly, inter alia, by building on previous resolutions, and to submit a report thereon to the Assembly."

I believe that it is particularly important that the Working Group focus on ensuring that existing resolutions are fully implemented. It could also consider other practical steps to improve our working methods, such as finalizing a repository of best practices for the General Assembly and its subsidiary bodies and periodically updating the rules of procedure to include recent Assembly decisions.

The Working Group will begin to consider these and other issues shortly. Today, I am very pleased to announce that His Excellency Ambassador Towpik, Permanent Representative of Poland, and His Excellency Ambassador Loizaga, Permanent Representative of Paraguay, have agreed to act as Co-Chairs of the Working Group. I would like to ask all Member States to extend your fullest cooperation and support to the Co-Chairs and invite members to bring forward constructive proposals and practical suggestions.

Mr. Lemos Godinho (Portugal): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The candidate countries Turkey, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Montenegro, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of

Moldova and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

The European Union wishes to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting and for providing the membership with an opportunity to look ahead to our discussion of General Assembly revitalization during the sixty-second session.

But before doing so, we would also like to express our appreciation for the efforts undertaken during the sixty-first session by the former President of the General Assembly, Her Excellency Sheikha Haya Rashed Al-Khalifa, aimed at revitalizing the General Assembly, and specifically the convening of thematic debates on issues of particular relevance to the membership.

We are grateful as well to the co-facilitators, Ambassador Daniele Bodini of San Marino and Ambassador Paul Badji of Senegal, for their hard work and widespread consultations, which have drawn active participation from the European Union (EU).

The EU supports efforts aimed at strengthening the General Assembly's role and authority, in line with the Charter of the United Nations, the principles and objectives outlined in the 2005 World Summit Outcome document and the measures adopted in several relevant General Assembly resolutions.

At this stage we believe that efforts at the practical level are paramount to ensure an overhaul of the General Assembly's performance.

The EU strongly believes that the General Assembly revitalizes itself, first and foremost, when it takes up issues of genuine concern to our peoples and to the international community as a whole. It is our collective duty to engage in meaningful initiatives, to live up to the expectations of our peoples and to make the work of the General Assembly ever more relevant.

Furthermore, it is the responsibility of each and every member State to apply in its daily business what has already been agreed by all and considered useful and necessary to revitalize this body. We recall that the revitalization of the General Assembly has been an ongoing process over several years and that numerous resolutions have already been adopted in the past. What was agreed at that time should be implemented, as was acknowledged by this Assembly when it adopted resolution 61/292.

Implementation will also be at the core of the proceedings of the ad hoc working group to be established at this session, as foreseen in the resolution I mentioned earlier. The mandate given to the ad hoc working group is, inter alia, "to evaluate and assess the status of implementation of relevant resolutions" (resolution 61/292, para. 2).

Not all the EU's well-known views and positions on General Assembly revitalization are fully reflected in those resolutions. On many occasions we would have liked to see the General Assembly adopt bolder and more ambitious decisions that reflected our positions better.

We believe, however, that promoting the implementation and the consolidation of existing resolutions and decisions will bring real added value and will impact significantly on the way the General Assembly, and the United Nations as a whole, conducts its work.

At the end of the current session we may well come to the conclusion that some of the shortcomings we recognize in the way that the General Assembly carries out its work and in the way that the major United Nations bodies relate to each other can be addressed by means of effective implementation of existing resolutions and decisions. To this end we look forward to the timely submission of a comprehensive report by the Secretary-General, as envisaged in paragraph 1 of resolution 61/292, so that that report can constitute a valuable basis for an informed and action-oriented discussion in the framework of the ad hoc working group.

We look forward to working with the persons you have appointed to conduct our work in the current session, under your overall leadership.

The EU undertakes to engage, in a constructive and pragmatic manner, in the proceedings of the ad hoc working group with a view to contributing to a successful outcome of our collective efforts aimed at further revitalizing the General Assembly.

Mr. Benmehidi (Algeria): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

First of all, I would like to express NAM's appreciation for the hard work done by Ambassador Badji of Senegal and Ambassador Bodini of San

Marino, the co-facilitators during the sixty-first session.

In adopting resolution 61/292 the General Assembly decided to assess during the current session the extent to which all its previous resolutions and decisions related to the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly have been implemented.

At the outset of this debate, the Non-Aligned Movement would like to recall the validity and relevance of its principles and positions regarding this matter.

The Non-Aligned Movement reiterates that the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly, which must be guided by the principles of democracy, transparency and accountability and must be achieved through consultations, is a critical component of the comprehensive reform of the United Nations. Its objectives should continue to be to strengthen the role and position of the General Assembly as the chief deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations.

The NAM also emphasizes that the improvement of the Assembly's procedural and working methods is only a first step towards more substantive improvements aimed at restoring and enhancing the role and authority of the General Assembly, including in the maintenance of international peace and security as stipulated in Articles 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 35 of the Charter.

The NAM, while expressing its readiness to continue to support all ongoing efforts to strengthen the central role and authority of the Assembly, wishes to underline that it will continue to oppose any reform proposal that seeks to contradict this objective. It will also continue to oppose any approach that seeks to or could result in undermining or minimizing the achievements of the General Assembly, diminishing its current role and functioning or raising questions about its relevance and credibility.

The Non-Aligned Movement expresses its concern that during the previous rounds of consultations, recurrent proposals were made, aimed at undermining the central role of the Assembly and its authority, including in relation to its prerogatives regarding administrative and budgetary questions. It is the hope of the NAM that any forthcoming proposals aimed at upgrading the revitalization of the work of the Assembly will be made in a spirit which excludes any such challenges.

With respect to assessing the status of implementation of all prior resolutions on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly, in particular landmark resolutions 58/126, 58/316, 59/313 and 60/286, the NAM is deeply disappointed that, at this stage of the sixty-second session, the report requested by the General Assembly in paragraph 1 of its resolution 61/292 in continuation of the reporting requirements established by resolutions 59/313 and 60/286 has not been made available to the membership, thus depriving participants in the forthcoming consultations of the necessary political guidance that was expected to emanate from the Assembly on the occasion of this debate. Nonetheless, the NAM wishes at this stage to make the following comments on a number of aspects.

The Non-Aligned Movement notes with growing concern the continuous attempts on the part of the Security Council to encroach upon other principal organs of the United Nations and their subsidiary bodies with respect to issues that clearly fall within the functions and powers of those latter structures. That was, again, the case recently when the Security Council held a thematic debate on the effects of climate change (see S/PV.5663), thus departing not only from the provisions of the Charter but also from the agreement reached among Member States to increase coordination and cooperation among the principal organs as well as complementarity in their work programmes.

The NAM underscores, once again, the need for full respect for the functions and powers of the principal organs, in particular the General Assembly, and for maintaining the balance among them in accordance with the Charter. In this respect, the NAM welcomes the proposals of the President of the General Assembly to convene a panel discussion on climate change and an informal meeting of the General Assembly on the implementation of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, and we look forward to making a substantive contribution at those events. Further, the NAM remains particularly concerned about the exercise of the Security Council setting norms and establishing definitions in areas beyond its competence.

The NAM expresses its satisfaction that the General Assembly has played a central role, both during the preparatory process of the 2005 World Summit and during the follow-up phase; this has allowed the Assembly to reassert its prerogatives. It also expresses its satisfaction at the progress made in implementing previous decisions, such as the improvement of transitional arrangements between the outgoing and incoming Presidents of the General Assembly and at the level of the bureaux of the Main Committees, the reinforcement of the Office of the President of the General Assembly and its increased media exposure, the valuable contribution made by the Main Committees in improving their methods of work, in particular by improving the interactive nature of their debates, and in many other areas.

However, NAM members remain convinced that genuine revitalization of the work of the General Assembly cannot afford to avoid addressing the main issue: the lack of implementation of all General Assembly resolutions and the underlying cause for that, namely, the lack of adequate resources made available to that end.

In this regard, the NAM is encouraged by the fact that Member States have been able to reach a common understanding on how to reinvigorate the discussion on mandates review, with a view to rationalizing the reallocation of freed resources. It is the hope of the NAM that the issue of providing adequate resources for the implementation of the decisions of the General Assembly will be addressed in a similar spirit.

Finally, the NAM looks forward to the convening of the Open-ended Working Group on the Revitalization of the General Assembly, as called for by resolution 61/292, and expresses its readiness to participate in the Group's work in order to arrive at a detailed and fair assessment of the status of implementation of all previous decisions and, if deemed necessary, to work towards the adoption of a new resolution aimed at further improvements.

Before I conclude, allow me to congratulate the Permanent Representatives of Poland and Paraguay for their appointments as co-Chairs of the Open-ended Working Group for the sixty-second session. I thank them for agreeing to assume this heavy task.

Mr. Ali (Malaysia): My delegation is pleased to participate in this debate on agenda item 121, on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly. Malaysia wishes to associate itself with the statement just made by the representative of Algeria on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

I would like to recall paragraph 30 of the Millennium Declaration, whereby our heads of State or Government resolved to restore the central position of the General Assembly as the chief deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations, and to enable it to play that role effectively. That call was reaffirmed by our heads of State or Government during the 2005 World Summit, where they reaffirmed the central position of the General Assembly as the chief deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations, as well as the role of the Assembly in the process of standard-setting and the codification of international law. They also called for strengthening the relationship between the General Assembly and the other principal organs to ensure better coordination on topical issues that require coordinated action by the United Nations, in accordance with their respective mandates.

We have been discussing the issue of the revitalization of the General Assembly since 1991, and we have made some progress over the years. It is important that this process continue as it is part of the ongoing process of United Nations reform. As the General Assembly is the most representative organ of the United Nations, we must dedicate ourselves to finding consensus on measures to revitalize the Assembly so that it can fulfil its mandate in accordance with the Charter. We must build upon the work done at previous sessions; the key to success is the implementation of their resolutions. We look to your leadership in this process, Mr. President.

In this regard, we share the sentiments of the Non-Aligned Movement about the absence of the status report that has been requested since the fifty-ninth session on the implementation of all resolutions regarding the revitalization of the General Assembly. This call was most recently reiterated in resolution 61/292. The status report would be an important input for our discussions, as it would allow us to take stock of what has been implemented and how to move forward. In the absence of such a report, we will be unable to take effective steps and measures to revitalize the General Assembly. We call for the timely issuance of the status report to enable Member States to study it and prepare for the Ad Hoc Working Group that has just been established.

We would also like to hear from you, Mr. President, concerning your proposals on the work plan for the Ad Hoc Working Group. It is important that the discussions on this item, like those on other agenda items, be held in an open, transparent and inclusive manner.

Any reform process should lead to the strengthening of the central role of the General Assembly, as well as restoring and enhancing its role, including in the maintenance of international peace and security, as provided for in the Charter. That entails strengthening its relationship and coordination with other organs. That has been adequately addressed in previous resolutions, which have stressed the need to fully respect and maintain the balance among the principal organs of the United Nations within their respective purviews and mandates under the Charter.

Efforts to enable the General Assembly to perform its functions as set out in the Charter must not be limited to procedural measures pertaining to its working methods. Improving the Assembly's procedures and working methods is only a step towards further substantive improvements in and revitalization of the Assembly, as stipulated in resolution 55/285.

If the General Assembly is to maintain its central position as the chief deliberative and representative organ of the United Nations, it must be cognizant of the current developments and take steps to address them. We welcome the initiative to have thematic debates, panel discussions and high-level segments with a view to producing concrete, practical and action-oriented results. We welcome the identification of the themes for the present session. In that regard, Mr. President, we are pleased that you organized the high-level event on climate change in September and have identified the continued consideration of the agenda item on climate change as a matter of priority for the General Assembly.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate that my delegation will work constructively with you, Mr. President, in launching the process of consultations among Member States in the Ad Hoc Working Group concerning the status report on the implementation of General Assembly resolutions.

Mr. Mansour (Tunisia) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, on behalf of my delegation, I wish to congratulate you, Mr. President, on the manner in which you are conducting this debate, which is particularly important to Member States. I also wish to congratulate the representatives of Senegal and San Marino on their considerable efforts during the sixty-first session as facilitators on the issue of the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly.

My delegation associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Algeria on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement concerning the agenda item before the Assembly today. We wish to make the following additional comments.

With regard to strengthening the role and the authority of the General Assembly, this year, once again, we continue to debate the issue of the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly. Again, we must emphasize that this is a rather sensitive process that should be pursued with resolve, seriousness and commitment by all Member States. It was in that spirit that our heads of State or Government reaffirmed, at the September 2005 World Summit, the Assembly's central role as the chief deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations.

My delegation believes that strengthening the role and the authority of the General Assembly involves, inter alia, including in its agenda obvious issues that are of particular importance, both to the Organization and to the international community at large. It also involves holding major thematic debates so that Member States can come to agreement on major substantive and timely issues. In that context, we welcome the quality of the thematic debates held at the previous session — a practice that, we are convinced, will continue under your presidency, Sir.

Furthermore, we believe that strengthening the role and the authority of the General Assembly also requires that we recognize its role regarding the maintenance of international peace and security. Indeed, while it is generally acknowledged that Article 24 of the Charter entrusts the Security Council with primary responsibility in this area, that responsibility is not exclusive. The General Assembly should thus give greater consideration to issues of international peace and security, in accordance with the relevant articles of the Charter and the historic resolution 377 (V), "Uniting for Peace".

The issue of the relationship between the General Assembly and other principal organs of the United Nations should be the object of in-depth consideration.

Such consideration should be carried out in plenary meetings and within the framework of an approach based on cooperation, maintaining balance and respect for the Charter roles of each organ.

In that spirit, while we appreciate the cooperation between the presidency of the Economic and Social Council and that of the General Assembly, we believe that greater coordination between the two organs would be useful, particularly in the choice of thematic debate subjects — a choice that must respect the old and new mandates recognized for the Economic and Social Council.

The issue of the reports that the Security Council must submit to the General Assembly under the relevant Charter articles continues to be a focus of our attention. Indeed, despite repeated appeals by Member States, the Council continues to present annual reports of a factual nature. The Council should also be able to present to the Assembly analytical reports, including on specialized subjects.

On another note, I wish to revisit the issue of the implementation of General Assembly resolutions. It must be noted that respect on the part of all Member States for the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly would greatly contribute to the strengthening of the Assembly's authority. My delegation supports the various ideas put forward in that regard, aimed at identifying the factors that are hindering the implementation of resolutions.

Our second subject concerns improving the working methods of the General Assembly. We are pleased that a number of measures related to improving the Assembly's working methods have been implemented — particularly the Main Committees' use in recent years of interactive debates, round tables and question-and-answer sessions. Those practices have made it possible to enrich the deliberations and the decision-making process of the Main Committees. However, these efforts still fall short of Member States' expectations.

Likewise, my delegation recognizes the merits of the recommendations made by the Secretary-General in his report on revitalization of the General Assembly issued in October 2006 (A/61/483), calling on Member States to draft more concise, targeted and concrete resolutions and decisions and to limit the length of statements in the General Assembly and the Main Committees. However, we believe that that in no way affects the sovereign rights of Member States with regard to taking the floor and submitting draft resolutions.

At another level, we believe that several of the measures proposed during debates on improving the General Assembly's working methods — measures on which no decision has yet been made — should be reconsidered. That applies to, inter alia, the proposal aimed at organizing the work of the Assembly's Main Committees in two substantive periods per session and harmonizing the Committees' best practices, which, it should be recalled, differ from Committee to Committee.

My third category of comments concerns the General Assembly's role in selecting the Secretary-General. The issue of selecting the Secretary-General has been debated over the past two years in the Open-ended Working Group, but no concrete measures have been decided upon. We continue to believe that, together, we should consider how Article 97 of the Charter should be interpreted in terms of greater involvement by Member States, through the General Assembly, in selecting the Secretary-General. Preferably, that should be done before the next election in that regard.

Finally, I wish to express my delegation's support for the mandate adopted by the General Assembly in August to establish, at the sixty-second session, an ad hoc working group on the revitalization of the General Assembly to

> "evaluate and assess the status of implementation of relevant resolutions, to identify ways to further enhance the role, authority, effectiveness and efficiency of the Assembly, ... and to submit a report thereon to the Assembly." (*resolution 61/292, para. 2*)

Mr. President, my delegation is very pleased with the establishment of the Working Group that you have just announced, and we congratulate the Co-Chairs, the Ambassadors of Poland and Paraguay, pledging to them the full support of the Tunisian delegation.

We hope that, in the context of this Working Group, the Member States will look into ideas and innovations that could return the General Assembly to its central place in the United Nations system. It is time to commit to this path seriously and with determination.

Mr. Malmierca Díaz (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation aligns itself with the statement by Algeria on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. I would like to simply add a few comments on this item.

Cuba would like to indicate its concern over the absence of a report on the revitalization of the General Assembly, which makes it difficult for the Member States to carry out an in-depth consideration of this important question. We reiterate our request for such a report to be published by the Secretariat as soon as possible so as to facilitate a debate of the quality that the importance of this issue requires.

The revitalization of the General Assembly is a decisive element for true reform of the United Nations. We cannot talk about an Organization with more democratic and effective actions, if the General Assembly does not fully exercise the power that the Charter confers on it. That process should reaffirm the central role of the General Assembly as the chief deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations, as recognized by the Charter and the Millennium Declaration.

It is important that when this process concludes, the Assembly strengthens its characteristics of independence and of an organ for comprehensive debate, where the freedom of its Member States to address the issues of interest to them is not restricted or limited.

We underscore the need to achieve an adequate balance among the principal organs of the United Nations, in accordance with the Charter, and for the Member States of the Organization to end attempts to transfer General Assembly agenda items to the Security Council.

The Security Council must strictly abide by the Charter's provisions, as well as by all resolutions of the General Assembly, as the main organ of the United Nations, and it must stop interfering in the questions that are clearly fall within the functions and powers of other principal organs of the United Nations and their subsidiary bodies.

My delegation would like to express its concern at the establishment of rules and definitions by the Security Council that exceed its competence, disregarding that, in accordance with Article 13 of the Charter, the General Assembly has the primary responsibility for the progressive development of international law and its codification.

In order to avoid those irregularities, which are setting precedents within the United Nations system, the Presidents of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council must carry out regular debates and coordinate among themselves with regard to the agenda and working plan of the respective principal organs they represent in order to make them increasingly coherent and complementary. This should be carried out in a manner mutually reinforcing and respectful of the mandates of each organ, avoiding duplication of effort and interference in the functions assigned to each.

The failure to implement the numerous Assembly resolutions must be eliminated. The resolutions constitute an important body of norms, but they remain inert because their non-compliance is related to the lack of political will on the part of the States that have political, military or economic power. It seems natural, then, that this also happens with the numerous resolutions referring to the reform of the United Nations and to the very revitalization of the Assembly, such as resolutions 58/126, 58/316 and 60/286, whose level of implementation is limited.

Cuba reiterates that the revitalization of the Assembly must not be merely a bureaucratic process exposed to the interests and whims of a few rich and powerful countries who try to impose unilateralism and use multilateralism only when it suits their interests. At the same time, we further hope that, as a result of such a process, the interaction between the Secretariat and the General Assembly will strengthen, so that the former can answer more effectively to the mandates that the Member States determine.

I conclude my statement by reiterating that in this complex yet necessary process of revitalizing the Assembly, the Cuban delegation's full willingness and constructive participation can be depended on.

Mr. Malhotra (India): We are pleased to participate in the debate on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly and to associate ourselves with the position of the Non-Aligned Movement as expressed by the delegation of Algeria.

The General Assembly is the chief deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations. Its revitalization should restore it to its

position of primacy, as per the Charter. It must ensure that the Assembly addresses itself to the developmental problems confronting the overwhelming majority of United Nations Member States. A revitalized General Assembly must also set the global agenda, especially on economic and financial issues.

Over the last few years, Member States have agreed on certain measures to rationalize and streamline the work and agenda of the General Assembly and to improve its working methods and those of its Main Committees. Those efforts have sought to give a sharper focus to its work. They have also led to addressing the needs of the Office of the President of the General Assembly, including during a period of transition. Efforts to trim the heavy burden of papers submitted to the Assembly have reduced the volume of such documentation. Such procedural changes mark a useful beginning.

However, the General Assembly cannot be revitalized via better coordination or streamlining of procedures alone. Central to revitalization is a focus on substantive measures aimed at restoring and enhancing the Assembly's role and authority to the position originally envisaged in the Charter.

The General Assembly can hardly be revitalized while its role, prerogatives and authority are being undermined by encroachment on its agenda by the Security Council. The balance between the principal organs of the United Nations envisaged in the Charter must be maintained and respected. Of special concern is the encroachment by the Security Council on issues that traditionally fall within the Assembly's competence, such as the process of standard-setting and codification of international law. Also of concern is the holding of thematic debates in the Security Council on issues that frequently fall within the purview of the General Assembly or the Economic and Social Council.

Resolution 60/286 reiterated that in addition to the Security Council making its annual report more analytical, it should submit special reports to the General Assembly. It is also important to fulfil this provision while the Council considers ways to further improve the quality of its reports to the Assembly. At the same time, we should guard against an over-zealous attitude that may lead to the General Assembly, in turn, intruding into areas that are primarily the core competence of other United Nations bodies.

It is equally important to implement the provisions of previous Assembly resolutions on the matter. It may be recalled that a substantive area that resolution 60/286 attempted to revitalize is the role of the Assembly in the selection of the Secretary-General. It sought to put in place a more inclusive and transparent procedure for the appointment of the Secretary-General, consistent with Article 97 of the Charter. Furthermore, resolution 59/313 requested the President of the Assembly to propose interactive debates on current issues on the agenda of the Assembly, in consultation with Member States. A procedure for ascertaining the views of Member States in deciding the themes for such thematic debates would help identify issues of current interest to Members and avoid duplication of discussions elsewhere in the United Nations.

In a dynamic and changing world, it is important to focus on the more substantive aspects of Assembly revitalization and to do so on an ongoing basis. In that context, we look forward to the setting up of the open-ended working group, in line with resolution 61/292, with a view to enhancing the role, authority, effectiveness and efficiency of the Assembly through an implementation of previous resolutions and consideration of creative new proposals.

In conclusion, we would like to congratulate the Permanent Representatives of Paraguay and Poland and wish them every success in the important work as the co-chairs of the open-ended working group.

Mr. Abdelaziz (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): The General Assembly is debating today one of the most important items on its agenda. That item acquires its importance from the nature of the role and authority of the Assembly, the chief deliberative and policymaking body and the most democratic organ of the Organization, not only because it comprises all the Member States, but also owing to its responsibility for supervising the balance of authority and obligations of the main and subsidiary organs, following up on the implementation of their mandates and taking the necessary measures to fulfil them, if deemed necessary.

With those considerations in mind, heads of State and Government underscored, in the 2005 World Summit Outcome, the necessity of adhering, within the context of United Nations reform, to the purposes and the principles of the Charter and reaffirmed that the credibility of the United Nations and an increase in its

capacity to meet its responsibilities is increasingly linked to the ability of the Assembly to exercise its institutional responsibilities. Despite the resolutions adopted by the Assembly in previous years, which included only some of the important steps needed to revitalize its role, many crucial reforms are still needed in that regard. Such reforms are becoming increasingly controversial and require the sincere political will of Member States to enhance good governance at the international level.

Egypt associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Algeria on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. I would like, in that connection, to stress a number of important points.

First, revitalization of the role of the Assembly should be based on monitoring the effective implementation of Assembly resolutions on this issue, while continuing to negotiate additional steps aiming at promoting further effectiveness of the Assembly. Those endeavours will not be successful if we limit our actions to rationalizing the agenda and mandates of the Assembly and its subsidiary committees, and to the reports submitted to them. Rather, the Assembly should be revitalized through a clear plan that starts with identifying these resolutions and the concrete obligations they stipulate and ends with their full and effective implementation.

Secondly, despite the success of the election of the eighth Secretary-General of the Organization and his appointment by the Assembly by consensus upon the recommendation of the Security Council, the deliberations on the responsibility and authority of the Assembly vis-à-vis the Council's role highlighted the fact that we must continue our search for ways and means to increase the role of the Assembly in that process. That should be accomplished in accordance with the provisions of the Charter and resolutions 51/241 and 60/286. A transparent mechanism should be established that allows the Assembly to evaluate candidates for the position and submit their names for consideration by the Council. It should also oversee the criteria that govern the Council's recommendations to the Assembly, without prejudice to, on one hand, the role of the Council in making recommendations and, on the other hand, the authority of the Assembly in approving such recommendations and appointing the recommended candidate or suggesting alternative candidates to the Council.

Thirdly, it is important to enhance the principal role of the Assembly in areas related to international peace and security, in accordance with Articles 10, 11, 12, 14 and 35 of the Charter. That role should not be limited to financing United Nations missions in situations of conflict or war, but should rather play a real and concrete preventive role and contribute to efforts aimed at achieving the settlement of current disputes.

Fourthly, it is imperative to respect the distinction stipulated in the Charter between the roles and functions of the principal organs of the Organization. We must also strengthen the prerogatives of the Assembly in overseeing the way the Security Council fulfils its main responsibilities in prioritizing the interests of the general membership of the United Nations over the national interests of its Members.

Fifthly, we must promote the capacity of the Assembly to address cases where the Security Council fails to undertake its obligations to maintain international peace and security, owing to a lack of unanimity among its permanent members that negatively affects the possibilities for settling those conflicts, and leads to the prolonging of those conflicts and to the suffering of people. This increases our conviction that an expansion of the membership of the Council is necessary in order to include new permanent members with the same rights and privileges as the current members, including the veto. That would strike a much-needed balance between the international Powers in the Council.

In expressing their concern over the magnitude of this situation, the heads of State and Government of the Non-Aligned Movement requested, at their summit meeting in Havana, the permanent representatives of the members of the Movement to submit a draft resolution to the Assembly aimed at restoring its authority in undertaking the actions needed to deal effectively with cases in which international peace and security are endangered but the Council has failed to address, owing to the misuse of the veto power, particularly in cases of genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and the cessation of hostilities between belligerent parties. Members of the Non-Aligned Movement will draft that resolution as soon as possible.

Sixthly, in the same context, we must enhance the capacity of the Assembly to uphold the principles that

govern the assessment of Member States' contributions to the Organization's budget, the most important of which is the capacity to pay, and to ensure that the principles of justice and equality embodied in the principle of "one country, one vote" will continue to govern our decision-making. That indicates the need to restore balance and confidence-building between developing and developed countries and the Secretariat, in order to implement the mandates established by Assembly resolutions and to ensure the financial resources necessary in that regard.

In order to achieve the aspirations of the general membership with regard to the revitalization of the role and authority of the Assembly, the ad hoc open-ended working group should be looking at the proposals of Member States that seek to lay down a framework for the implementation of previous resolutions on this important issue. At the same time, they should discuss the status of implementation of Assembly resolutions and the means to ensure follow-up on their implementation, including through a comprehensive mechanism ensuring the commitment of Member States to implementing those resolutions, and even, if needed, by amending the Charter to achieve those aims. In addition, they must exert a sincere parallel effort in reviewing mandates in order to decrease the burden on the Assembly by avoiding redundancy and duplication. That will ultimately revitalize the role of the Assembly by increasing the obligatory nature of its resolutions and decreasing redundancy. This also represents a more integrated approach to all aspects of the reform of the United Nations.

Mr. Gallardo (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): The challenges of globalization call for governance even in the international sphere, and we should not be surprised that since 1991 Member States have decided to act within the United Nations to eliminate the threats and paralysis that were caused by the bipolarity of the cold war. Since 1991, we have gone through different phases in this attempt. Today, we are more fragmented, and no country alone can manage globalization. The power of each of the nations represented here has its limits.

Today, the United Nations is, more than ever, the general reference for the international agenda and its priorities. It is our responsibility as States to guide the Organization with efficiency, clarity, vision and a strategic approach, in order to help to resolve the problems of peace and security, development and the environment, human rights, the right to humanitarian assistance, international law and the coherence problems of the United Nations, its mandates, its Secretariat and its other bodies. This is an enormous task that lies in the hands of 192 delegations.

We acknowledge the leadership of the Presidents of the General Assembly. They must guide our debates at every session, with a short agenda of priorities. But in the final analysis, it is we, the Member States concerned, that must own this process. There can be no revitalization of the General Assembly without the political will to work together, to achieve goals in areas that interest all parties and, in that way, to contribute constructively to the adoption of significant decisions by the General Assembly.

Our discussions on how to tackle climate change; on how to make progress in attaining the Millennium Development Goals and the goals of the partnership for development; how to be more creative and show more solidarity in financing for development; how to move forward with the implementation of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy; and how to continue the reform of the United Nations: all of these are substantive and central questions in the Organization's endeavour to maintain its political relevance and its added value.

In recent years, we have seen the General Assembly competing with other organs and feeling threatened by the growth in their activities and functions. Sometimes, we have to put ourselves in the shoes of our partners and ensure that the General Assembly promotes new debates, such as thematic debates in the areas of the maintenance of international peace and security, and that it adopts a more cooperative approach with the Secretariat, the Economic and Social Council and even the Security Council.

We must concern ourselves with our working methods. Making the General Assembly more effective could mean limiting the length of debates and organizing a better system of specialized bodies reporting to the General Assembly. We have to ask ourselves if our working methods and our practices have made it less interesting to follow our debates, which some people perceive as monologues. We have to ask ourselves if we cannot organize more interactive meeting formats.

Does the negotiation of certain resolutions only among interested delegations or through consultation systems involving restricted ad hoc groups, even though necessary, make us less transparent? Should we not have other documents besides resolutions that transmit our decisions or reflect public opinion in our debates? How many of the 11 most recent resolutions adopted on the revitalization of the General Assembly are annexed to the General Assembly's rules for ease of reference? How can we establish a standing mandate review process in order to prevent giving the impression of a body that does not follow up on its decisions in timely manner?

Those are, very briefly, some of the ideas that my delegation believes it is important to raise. We have to continue to stress that we must better organize our work. That is the utility of the Working Group that we have set up. In this Working Group and in its mandate my delegation sees the possibility of working along three main lines: first, the strategic function of prioritizing our work; secondly, the development of a cooperative approach with other bodies of the United Nations system; and, finally, generating and evaluating ideas on how to make our working methods more systematic, how to disseminate them and how to improve them.

Peru knows that, with the United Nations, the expectations are always greater than the possibilities. If we are to enhance its effectiveness, we must put our political will into play and organize ourselves better.

In conclusion, we would like to welcome the appointment of the representatives of Paraguay and Poland to facilitate the work of the Working Group. We wish both of them every success.

Mr. Badji (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): My delegation concurs with the statement made by the representative of Algeria on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement on agenda item 121. We are pleased to participate in this debate on the revitalization of the General Assembly, which is one of the fundamental aspects of United Nations reform.

Mr. President, like your illustrious predecessors, such as Ms. Haya Rashed Al-Khalifa, whose commitment I hail, you are showing your will to work with Member States in strengthening the principal deliberative organ of the United Nations. You can count on the complete availability of the Senegalese delegation, which will spare no effort to support you in this process. The reformulation of the title of this process, that you proposed in your introductory remarks — "The role of the General Assembly in strengthening the United Nations system" — is acceptable to my delegation.

The vitality of the General Assembly, as with any other body or organization, is measured against the yardstick of its results, compared with its objectives and the wherewithal it has to discharge its mission. Thus, the issues of revitalization themselves constitute a questioning of the effectiveness of the methods of action of the General Assembly, the efficiency of the actions it mandates and the relevance of its working methods. Therefore, the exercise that brings us together is an invitation to introspection without complacency for all Member States in order both to identify the weaknesses and the failings of the General Assembly and to determine each actor's share of responsibility, in order to identify appropriate solutions.

In this regard, the Senegalese delegation joins previous speakers in expressing its concern at the delay in the issuance of the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of resolutions having to do with revitalization of the work of the General Assembly, as requested in resolution 61/292 dated 2 August 2007.

With respect to the implementation of resolutions, my delegation is of the view that that is the major barometer of the effectiveness of our work. In this area, it is vital that we — Member States and the Secretariat — make coordinated efforts, if we want to prevent the General Assembly from becoming, as one of our colleagues has ironically defined it, "a body that adopts resolutions that no one takes into account". That definition, although somewhat exaggerated, is sufficiently instructive concerning our method of action, for let us acknowledge along with its author that the percentage of resolutions that are implemented, including those adopted by consensus, remains ludicrous.

Moreover, the case of resolutions 58/126, 58/316, 59/313 and 60/286 — all three having to do with revitalization of the General Assembly — are all eloquent proof of that. Similar situations that have a negative impact on the image of the General Assembly involve Member States as well as the Secretariat and merit our particular attention, with a view to possibly establishing a mechanism to monitor the implementation of resolutions.

However, beyond looking for specific solutions for implementing the results of our deliberations, we need to do more in-depth thinking on our possibilities for streamlining resolutions and the agenda of the General Assembly in a constructive spirit while respecting the rights of all Member States under the rules of procedure. Within that framework, the Bureau of the Assembly, whose role should be strengthened, could, following consultations with Member States, make recommendations to the Secretary-General in developing the agenda to adapt it to the challenges of the day.

In order to attract attention and to be worthy of its responsibilities, the General Assembly should consider more often topical matters that mobilize international public opinion so that it can make recommendations for action to the Secretary-General and other bodies, funds and programmes of the United Nations, or to Member States, or at least to express its opinion. It would also be desirable to strengthen certain positive initiatives, in particular the holding of thematic debates and informational meetings with the Secretary-General, which contribute to the revitalization of the General Assembly. It is only through that perspective that the General Assembly will have more visibility and enjoy better media coverage, notwithstanding the efforts that the Secretariat should make in this area.

Additionally, a dynamic and proactive Assembly, fully playing the role given to it by the United Nations Charter, could contribute to creating conditions for more balanced and effective cooperation among the principal organs of the Organization. Along those same lines, we should consider improving our working methods to ensure that Assembly meetings will not take place in a half-empty room, as is often the case.

On that subject, it would be appropriate for the President of the Assembly to suggest at the beginning of each meeting, as is authorized by the rules of procedure, a time limit for delegations to speak in order to allow all Member States to express themselves within a reasonable amount of time.

During the Assembly's sixty-first session, it was my privilege — along with my colleague and friend, Ambassador Daniele Bodini, Permanent Representative of San Marino — to be chosen by the President to conduct consultations with Member States on the revitalization of the General Assembly. After more than 80 meetings with Permanent Representatives of Member States, six interactive debates and a number of informal meetings, we produced a report that, I believe, could be a good basis for the work of our present and future deliberations on this deliberative body, whose membership includes all United Nations Member States.

My delegation hopes that the open-ended Working Group will be rapidly established and allow us to conduct open, transparent and inclusive discussions in the well-understood interests of all nations and all peoples represented here. To our colleagues, the Permanent Representatives of Poland and Paraguay, who were appointed by the current Assembly President to co-chair the Working Group, we convey our fervent hopes for complete success in the discharge of their exalted mission.

Mr. Álvarez (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): We wish to offer Uruguay's gratitude for the excellent efforts by the Presidents of the General Assembly at its sixty-first and sixty-second sessions and also to the co-facilitators, the Permanent Representatives of San Marino and Senegal. We wish to congratulate the Permanent Representatives of Paraguay and Poland, who will conduct the work of the open-ended Working Group for the sixty-second session.

The General Assembly has a central role to play as the Organization's principal deliberative, policymaking and representative organ. Yet, recent years have produced a marked perception of decline in the Assembly's prestige. Among the diagnosed causes for that perception are the endless and outdated agendas, the production of mandates for the Secretariat that are sometimes vague or that lack adequate financing, and the excessive application of the consensus rule in the Assembly's decision-making, which has meant that those decisions reflect the minimum common denominator of different existing opinions — which in some cases are contradictory — and reflect as well generalities that are remote from any commitment or action by the Assembly.

With respect to the revitalization of the General Assembly, there is, in our opinion, a confused perception. The problem does not lie so much in Assembly reform as in the Assembly's fully exercising its powers derived from the Charter, in particular those related to peace and security. For example, the General Assembly cannot make recommendations in the areas

related to Article 12 of the Charter or on those items under consideration by and on the agenda of the Security Council. However, it can debate those items, the most important aspects on the international agenda, and in some cases it can reaffirm a decision of the Security Council, legitimizing the decision of that principle organ.

The main thrusts of a revitalization of the General Assembly must include the following points.

On the rationalization of its work, this must take place mainly through reducing the number of items on the agenda, beginning with those that everyone knows have lost validity and interest. The General Assembly must approach in a focused manner the items of greatest and most topical interest, including international migration, global health, human rights, humanitarian emergencies and the fight against terrorism. An example of such rationalization can be found in the thematic debates that have been developing during the two most recent Assembly presidencies. The specific interests of States regarding an eventual elimination of items from the agenda would be given ample consideration in rules 13, 14 and 15 of the Assembly's rules of procedure.

The operation of the Assembly's committees should be redefined, structuring their work in a manner that would permit results-based analysis and improve the criteria for assigning mandates to the Secretariat. These issues must be studied not from a formalistic or bureaucratic point of view, but rather from one in which decisions are based on specific requirements for the implementation of the mandates, attempting, at the same time, to acquire funds for the mandates that are related to the substantive agenda items. We must study the structure and operation of the committees, as well as oversight mechanisms for their work and results.

And the last point, which we feel is very important, is the implementation of the decisions of the heads of State or Government contained in the 2005 Outcome Document on the expansion and deepening of the relations of the United Nations General Assembly with non-governmental organizations. This is with respect to the main items that we believe should be considered in a reform.

But, furthermore, we support what was decided in resolution 61/292 — that is, to assess and reconsider the state of implementation of the most relevant resolutions in order to identify paths that would make it possible to have a more authoritative, efficient and effective General Assembly, one that would build on past achievements.

Uruguay maintains its negotiating position for overcoming the current situation, namely, prioritizing the effective implementation of the mass of already approved resolutions, as well as making progress on those that are still pending. We would be in favour of measures that aim to eliminate bureaucratic obstacles and the duplication of effort, as well as of measures that call for a rational use of resources. This would help to achieve action that is more in line with current needs of the Organization and its Members.

Mrs. Aitimova (Kazakhstan): At the 2005 World Summit, Member States reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening the United Nations with a view to enhancing its authority and efficiency, as well as its capacity to effectively address the full range of challenges of our time.

In this regard, the delegation of Kazakhstan commends the Secretary-General for his determination to breathe new life and inject renewed confidence into a strengthened United Nations that is effective, efficient, coherent and accountable. In our view, the reform of the United Nations should be geared, first and foremost, to the consolidation of the international community in pursuit of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

We should focus our efforts on enhancing the effectiveness of our Organization. As members of the community of nations, we should work to improve the image of the United Nations as the bastion of peoples' hopes and aspirations.

Recently, I had the chance to meet with some students from a college here in the United States. When I presented myself as the Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan to the United Nations, many young people wanted to know more about our activities and responsibilities, about our current and future positions. This means that the new generation would like to see us more effective and more responsible.

Kazakhstan believes that a United Nations General Assembly playing a greater role and with improved status will promote genuine democracy in international relations. The General Assembly should have a central position as the chief deliberative,

policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations.

Kazakhstan notes certain progress in the efforts to improve the Assembly's efficiency and working methods. Yet we believe that this process should not replace reforms that are aimed, first and foremost, at strengthening the Assembly's authority. The delegation of Kazakhstan commends the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-first session, Her Excellency Sheikha Haya Rashed Al-Khalifa, for her efforts to increase the visibility of the Assembly and for holding four informal thematic debates on partnerships towards achieving the MDGs: taking stock, moving forward; gender equality and the empowerment of women; civilizations and the challenge for peace: obstacles and opportunities; and climate change as a global challenge — all which offered the Members States excellent opportunities to debate some of the most pressing challenges facing the international community.

We would also like to commend the two facilitators Ambassador Badji, the Permanent Representative of Senegal, and Ambassador Bodini, the Permanent Representative of San Marino, for their tireless efforts in leading consultations on this issue. We also note resolution 61/292 on revitalizing the role and authority of the General Assembly and strengthening its performance.

As the reports of the two facilitators indicates, all Member States have a strong desire to revitalize the General Assembly and to strengthen its efficiency. We believe that it is very important to continue our work and to implement all General Assembly resolutions on its revitalization.

Kazakhstan expresses its strong support for the suggestion of more dialogue and less monologue, as well as the idea to convene debates on important themes such as climate change, the MDGs, counter-terrorism, management reform, Security Council reform and others. The idea of establishing the practice of regular, informal briefings by the Secretary-General in the General Assembly is also a practice that can bring us closer to solving important problems.

We hope that a new, updated report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolutions on revitalization will provide a solid basis for our further deliberations on this important issue. Furthermore, we call on the President of the General Assembly to establish, in accordance with the resolution 61/292, the ad hoc working group on the revitalization of the General Assembly.

We sincerely hope that under this Presidency we will be able to make solid progress on this important issue and we stand ready to support you, Mr. President, in your endeavours in this regard.

Mr. Dapkiunas (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): For our delegation, the question on revitalizing the work the General Assembly is of high priority. This issue is also important for the Non-Aligned Movement, whose statement Belarus supports.

During the previous session of the General Assembly, we adopted a resolution on strengthening the Assembly's role and authority. Unlike previous resolutions, this document is procedural. Unfortunately, during the negotiating process on the draft resolution, a number of clear and substantive proposals — which could have strengthened the central role of the General Assembly in developing significant decisions on issues on the international agenda — were blocked. We are convinced that a draft resolution on revitalizing the work of the Assembly with greater practical content would meet, to a greater extent, the interests of Member States.

We believe that the consultation process and revitalizing the work of the Assembly must be put back on a constructive track. The delegation of Belarus is concerned about the delay in the issuance by the Secretary-General, for the consideration of Member States, of updated data to his report on the implementation of resolutions on the revitalization of the work of the Assembly. This data was called for in resolution 61/292 and our delegation had expected it ahead of time, before today's meeting of the General Assembly.

A key element of resolution 61/292 is the establishment, at the sixty-second session, of a working group to analyse the implementation of Assembly decisions, the revitalization of the General Assembly and the making the relevant recommendations. We intend to actively participate in the work of that group. Our own independent, preliminary analysis of the status of the implementation of decisions regarding the revitalization of the work of the Assembly has identified a number of important provisions that are not being fully implemented or are not being implemented

at all. It is our intent to share these conclusions with the group.

Moreover, we hope that a survey of the extent of implementation of resolutions on the revitalization of the work of the Assembly will proceed expeditiously and be used above all to develop new proposals to be enshrined in the new resolution with a view to their subsequent effective implementation. We also believe that repetitive language should be used sparingly and with clear justification of its relevance by the author.

In selecting a format for the negotiation process, we believe that we must take into account the positives and negatives of negotiating methods used in prior sessions, in particular the sixty-first session. The Belarus delegation calls for transparent consultations and for the opportunity to be made available to all interested States Members of the United Nations to participate in all phases.

In our view, a starting point and basis for the forthcoming work on a resolution could be the following provisions, which were approved in prior consultations and which, in our view, enjoy significant support from a large number of delegations.

First, we need to enhance the role of the General Assembly in resolving issues relating to international peace and security, in particular by broadening opportunities for United Nations Member States to convene special emergency sessions of the General Assembly. The Security Council should adopt the practice of preparing periodic analytical reports on topical issues on the international agenda for consideration by the General Assembly. A big step forward would be the strengthening of the principle of equitable regional rotation in the selection of the Secretary-General. Introducing a cogent and transparent rule of regional rotation would help to enhance the atmosphere of trust between Member States and allay the unnecessary tension that, unfortunately, is sometimes inherent in the process of electing the head of the Secretariat.

The Secretariat must increase the level of media coverage of the General Assembly's activities and strike the right balance in publicizing the work of the United Nations principal organs. This year, thanks to the Presidents of the General Assembly at its sixty-first and sixty-second sessions, we have had very interesting debates on topical issues on the international agenda. Many substantive statements and proposals have been made from this rostrum that should become, via the leading media outlets, part of the heritage of broader world public opinion.

We believe that we also need to rationalize the work of the Main Committees of the General Assembly by reducing the time for the consideration of issues inscribed on a number of agenda items. Introducing such an element of discipline would lead to the more effective use both of delegations' working time and of the resources devoted to conference servicing.

A further step towards the more effective use of time could be the introduction by the General Assembly of an opportunity for interested States to make brief oral statements, supplemented by the distribution in the Hall of longer written statements on various issues. The verbatim and summary records would, of course, include the full versions of each statement. In our opinion, that would ultimately help to reflect the positions of States on agenda items, while reducing the resources used by conference services.

Our delegation is convinced that the President of the General Assembly should be provided with the same protocol services as the Secretary-General, including when the President visits United Nations Member States. That would allow us, not in words but in deeds, to demonstrate the lofty and unique status of the General Assembly. It is also important to enhance the role of the Assembly's Vice-Presidents in its work by increasing their practical participation in coordinating consultations on the most important and complex issues on the agenda.

Finally, we feel that we should revert to an issue that was actively discussed among the regional groups at the last session. In our view, the General Assembly must restore fair regional representation in the General Committee. A practical model for a decision on that topic could be developed in consultations on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly.

Mr. Mohamed (Yemen) (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the delegation of the Republic of Yemen, I should like to extend our thanks and gratitude to you, Sir, for your leadership of this important meeting. I also thank the former President of the General Assembly, Sheikha Haya Rashed Al-Khalifa, for her efforts in the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly. I wish her success in all her future endeavours.

I also take this opportunity to pay tribute to the two facilitators, the Permanent Representatives of San Marino and Senegal, for their excellent efforts in guiding the consultations of the sixty-first session of the General Assembly, which were occasionally very complex. We further welcome the Permanent Representatives of Poland and Uruguay, who will conduct the consultations on this difficult task at the current session.

My delegation also supports the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Algeria on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Yemen has followed with great interest the question of the revitalization of the General Assembly over the past few sessions. Today, we are debating the item because of the General Assembly's pivotal role as the main deliberative body of the United Nations, in which all Member States are represented on an equal footing and policies are developed and debates convened.

The revitalization of the General Assembly is aimed at strengthening its authority and role and enabling it to assume its responsibilities and competences in accordance with the Charter. It would also limit the encroachment by the Security Council on the General Assembly's purview. We feel that the Council's gradual encroachment on the Assembly's competencies has generated increasing tension and disharmony between the two organs and will eventually lead to paralysis of the Assembly, which in turn would prevent it from playing its role and discharging its responsibilities and mandates according to the Charter.

We therefore feel that the revitalization of the General Assembly must be a priority in the comprehensive reform process, allowing it to succeed in its role. It would also require us to eliminate redundancy, duplication and the discussion of the same item in more than one body of the United Nations, and would permit the Assembly to focus on issues to the tangible benefit of all the peoples of the world.

My delegation stresses the importance of establishing an ad hoc working group, pursuant to paragraph 2 of resolution 61/292, on the revitalization of the General Assembly, open to all Member States, to evaluate and assess the status of implementation of relevant resolutions, to identify ways to further enhance the role, authority, effectiveness and efficiency of the Assembly. We also call for an accelerated report of the Secretary-General on the status of the implementation of the resolutions of the General Assembly in the aforementioned resolution. Such reports should be issued early enough to allow us sufficient time to discuss them in the Main Committees or in plenary.

We are concerned that the work of the Council is being stymied by the excessive use of the right of veto, which prevents the Council from assuming its main role in the maintenance of international peace and security. We therefore feel that the General Assembly has an important role to play in strengthening international peace and security when the Security Council fails to do so, particularly given the fact that all Member States are represented without exception in this organ and that no select few are endowed with additional privileges.

We should therefore acknowledge the focal role of the General Assembly in the maintenance of international peace and security, since such a role is not the exclusive purview of the Security Council. This is a matter for all Member States, and it should not be reserved for a select few where differences among them, when they occur, often obstruct the passing of appropriate resolutions. Yemen realizes the important role of the General Assembly in selecting and appointing the Secretary-General, and we support the Assembly's efforts in this respect. We stress that the selection of the Secretary-General must be done in a more transparent and inclusive manner and must involve all Member States in accordance with the Charter.

The strengthening of the Office of the President of the General Assembly means that we are strengthening the authority of the General Assembly. The Assembly President will not be able to undertake his role as facilitator if we fail to allow the Office to have sufficient and qualified human resources. We welcome the periodic meetings with the Presidents of the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, and we call for those meetings to continue so that more coordination is achieved among the programmes of all three bodies. That would encourage their cooperation to become complementary, improving the performance and increasing the credibility and the role of the Organization.

Mr. Wolff (United States of America): I appreciate the opportunity to speak on this important issue today, although I note the sparse attendance in the Hall, which I hope does not reflect either a lack of interest or any sense of futility regarding this subject matter.

At the outset, I would like to recall the conclusions drawn by the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change. The Panel noted that the General Assembly's capacity

> "is often squandered on debates about minutiae or thematic topics outpaced by real-world events. Its inability to reach closure on issues undermines its relevance. An unwieldy and static agenda leads to repetitive debates". (*A/59/565, para. 241*)

Unfortunately, in our view, these obvious shortcomings are now threatening to undermine the very process of Assembly reform; indeed, the agenda item under consideration is at risk of falling victim to the very same deficiencies it seeks to rectify.

Prior debates on General Assembly reform have produced valuable and insightful, if modest, recommendations, including those put forward by the Co-Chairs at the sixty-first session, Ambassadors Bodini and Badji. However, few of those recommendations have been able to alter significantly the prevailing "business as usual" mind-set. In the past few weeks alone, we have witnessed the passage of many resolutions whose texts have not been significantly revised in decades, contributing to an increased perception of the Assembly's irrelevance. This dangerous slide towards irrelevance is displayed, for instance, in the stark contrast between the static and unbalanced resolutions on the situation in Palestine and the reinvigorated effort to achieve tangible progress on the ground. Some of the most vocal proponents of these outdated resolutions are the same countries involved in the very effort underway this week to launch a process at Annapolis that we hope will lead to a permanent Israeli-Palestinian peace.

We have also recently witnessed renewed interest in the reform of other United Nations organs, including the Security Council. As President Kerim noted in his concluding statement on 14 November (see A/62/PV.51), one of the seven pillars of Security Council reform is the necessity of reforming the greater United Nations system. Clearly, meaningful reform of the United Nations system must include meaningful reform of the General Assembly, including in areas such as the financing of and decision-making by the Organization.

The convening of the current session's ad hoc working group represents a new opportunity for Member States to reinvigorate their efforts and take ownership of the General Assembly's effectiveness and credibility. The onus of restoring the public's trust in the Assembly's ability to respond to real-world issues falls on our collective shoulders.

How do we accomplish this task? First, we must be guided by the mandate of the working group as established in resolution 61/292 — that is, we must evaluate and assess the status of implementation of relevant resolutions on revitalization and identify ways to further enhance the role, authority, effectiveness and efficiency of the Assembly. Those two proposals are not mutually exclusive. In fact, we believe that the best way to enhance the role, authority, effectiveness and efficiency of the Assembly is by implementing these relevant resolutions.

In this regard I would like to highlight several recommendations contained in the relevant resolutions that seek to reform the General Assembly's working methods.

There is a clear need to rationalize the Assembly's programme of work by focusing its efforts on addressing contemporary challenges. We must discard the outdated debates recycled year after year, which are no longer reflective of current realities.

Greater cooperation among the principal organs, as well as between the General Assembly and its Main Committees, will enhance their ability to carry out their competencies, as mandated in the Charter. Greater cooperation will also help streamline agendas and reduce wasteful overlap and inter-organ power struggles.

Member States should exercise discipline in their submission of draft resolutions in the Assembly. Adopting resolutions on outdated or obscure topics diminishes the credibility of this body, while selectively recalling language from previous resolutions weakens their standing.

These recommendations, and numerous others contained in resolutions from past sessions, provide ample material for initiating lasting reform. In the sixty-second session, the working group must take

stock of the status of implementation of these proposals, identifying improvements made and areas in which tangible results remain elusive. The constructive and painstakingly negotiated proposals contained in previous resolutions have already established the path to revitalization. Now it is our collective responsibility to follow that path to its logical conclusion: a dynamic and responsive General Assembly that is capable of forging consensus on issues of greatest contemporary importance.

My delegation looks forward to working closely with you, Mr. President, and with our counterparts from other delegations to capitalize on this opportunity to achieve concrete reform.

Mr. Tarragô (Brazil): It is not an overstatement to characterize the revitalization of the General Assembly as one of the key systemic issues requiring attentive consideration and action. Restoring the vitality of the Assembly demands the strengthening of the authority and the role of the chief deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations. It also means organizing and conducting its work in a manner consistent with its proper, central place in the debate of and the search for solutions to the pressing problems of today's international agenda.

The path towards those goals has been a long one, but there has been progress. The conceptual basis of the revitalization was clearly laid out in a set of resolutions adopted in the latest sessions of the Assembly. Additionally, as indicated in the Secretary-General's report of October 2006 (A/61/483), concrete measures have been taken in areas such as, for example, the role of the President and the working methods of this organ.

It is now time to implement decisions already agreed upon. One example in the critical area of the role and authority of the General Assembly comes to mind. As recalled in the past, this Assembly is clearly empowered to discuss issues pertaining to the maintenance of international peace and security, without prejudice to the prerogatives of the Security Council. One possible vehicle for this could be the thematic debates we initiated precisely as a result of our efforts to revitalize the Assembly. We believe it would be fitting for the President of every session to suggest an increased number of topics related to international peace and security to be discussed by the membership. This exercise would strengthen the indispensable dialogue between the Security Council and those on whose behalf it acts. The Council would benefit from valuable input offered by delegations, while the Assembly would enhance the participation of Member States in better-informed decisions that may affect direct legitimate interests.

Another important aspect of our efforts to revitalize the Assembly regards the selection of the Secretary-General. The discussions held in the sixty-first session were quite useful. We see as significant the relevant paragraphs of resolution 60/286. Full compliance with the decisions therein will allow the General Assembly to become more involved in such selection. When the right time comes, it will be especially important that the selection of the Secretary-General be as inclusive and transparent as possible. The Organization will also benefit from serious consideration of the invitation extended to the Security Council to update the Assembly on steps it takes in this regard.

Behind these concrete measures lies the crucial notion of checks and balances among the principal United Nations organs. We believe that the United Nations will be strengthened if we manage to set up a relationship that is truly complementary and mutually reinforcing, with proper balance among its organs, in accordance with the Charter. Clearly, the optimum functioning of the system as envisaged in the Charter would be facilitated by meaningful reform of the Security Council. A more representative and transparent Council would support a vital and active General Assembly, just as a revitalized Assembly would invigorate its trust in an effective and responsive Council.

These are some key perspectives that Brazil will take with it to the Ad Hoc Working Group established by resolution 61/292. We believe that the Group has a contribution to make at this juncture of our work. Its main tasks will be to help us implement what has been decided and to pursue consideration of ways to further improve the work of the General Assembly.

We are interested in moving expeditiously. We were reassured by your letter of 8 November and your commitment, Sir, to appointing chairs of the Working Group, which you have done. We must now resume focused work on this key systemic issue, sooner rather than later.

On this occasion, I would like to congratulate the Permanent Representatives of Paraguay and Poland on their designation to conduct consultations in the Ad Hoc Working Group. My delegation is ready to cooperate with you, Mr. President, and with the Co-Chairs in the Working Group on moving forward this important item on our agenda.

Mr. Hermida Castillo (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation considers this item one of the most important on the agenda of the sixty-second session of the General Assembly, since we are referring to the principal deliberative policymaking and democratic organ of the United Nations. Revitalization is an integral part of the comprehensive reform of the Organization, with the objective of making it more effective and efficient. It is a dynamic process, in accordance with the parameters established in the Charter, in the 2005 Outcome Document and in the Millennium Summit.

In order to maintain harmony and the balance established in the Charter, we have to uphold the functions and powers that the Charter gives to the principal organs of the United Nations, mainly to the General Assembly. To have effective multilateralism, and in order to maintain the Assembly's role as the main forum for debate and the resolution of global problems, we have to respect the jurisdictions established for every organ.

The Security Council, therefore, should not encroach on the functions of other organs establishing standards, legislative texts and even definitions — questions that directly concern the functions and powers of the General Assembly and of the Economic and Social Council. For the smooth operation of the Assembly, the United Nations has to have sufficient resources to comply with and to implement the programmes and activities that have been entrusted to it through the mandates established by the resolutions adopted.

We are in agreement with the President of the General Assembly and support him with action on the five points he has identified as global priorities of our time — that is, climate change, financing for development, the implementation of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, the follow-up to measures to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and internal reform of the United Nations. However, we should add to these five points the role played by the General Assembly in the maintenance of international peace and security, especially in those cases where the Security Council does not deal with situations that involve crimes against humanity, war crimes, genocide or ceasefires. This means that the Assembly should adopt the corresponding measures to resolve the matter when the Council does not comply with its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, as was recommended by the heads of State and Government at the Havana Summit of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

In order to work well, we must have the necessary tools, in the same way that delegations, in order to have an adequate, deep, extensive or comprehensive debate, must rely on the documentation published by the Secretariat. However, by last Friday evening we still had not seen the report of the Secretary-General. Last year this report was published on 2 October. We believe that this situation should not recur.

Other issues that we have seen in this session involve lack of wisdom regarding the number of meetings that are assigned to certain items in plenary. We have seen in the Journal on many occasions that for a specific item — for example, Security Council reform — only one or two meetings are scheduled, when four or five are needed. We believe that this could be easily resolved if we simply considered the number of meetings that the item warranted at a previous session or, if it is a new item, the interest shown in it by delegations in informal meetings or in the cooperation by delegations in the drafting of reports of the Secretary-General.

In the subsidiary bodies of the General Assembly and in the functional commissions, five or six meetings are sometimes scheduled at the same time, making it impossible for small or medium-sized delegations to take part in all of the meetings for staff reasons.

In the Sixth Committee, there was an overlapping of meetings with consultations on the Law of the Sea and Sustainable Fisheries. This runs counter to the written provision in operative paragraph 133 of resolution 61/222, in which the General Assembly decided "to ensure that the consultations are scheduled in such a way as to avoid overlap with the period during which the Sixth Committee is meeting".

In spite of these small snags that can be easily resolved by the Secretariat, the process of

revitalization has also had its successes and achievements with, for example, the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Human Rights Council, with the programming of interactive debates and items that are chosen for the debates and with the selection of new dates on which the General Assembly elects its President, Vice-Presidents and the Chairmen of the Main Committees. We have thereby strengthened the coordination and preparation of work between the Main Committees and the plenary, as well as the role of the Bureau.

We are convinced that, with the efforts of all States and the necessary political will, the process of revitalizing the General Assembly could achieve the results desired and strengthen the process of democratizing and reforming the United Nations itself that humankind awaits.

Mr. Nguyen Tat Thanh (Viet Nam): On behalf of the Vietnamese delegation, I wish to express our high appreciation to Ambassador Badji of Senegal and Ambassador Bodini of San Marino for their dedicated efforts to the revitalization of the General Assembly.

My delegation also wants to support the statement made earlier by the representative of Algeria on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

For the past 16 years, in order to enable the United Nations to better address global issues and contemporary transnational threats, Member States have acknowledged the growing importance of revitalizing the work of the General Assembly and have contributed a fair amount of resources to that end. Many initiatives and ideas have been introduced and commendable efforts have been made. Difficult issues have been highlighted and brought into better focus. It is clear to us all, however, that the result that we want to achieve is still far ahead.

The World Summit Outcome Document, while reaffirming the central position of the General Assembly as the chief deliberative and policymaking and most representative organ of the United Nations, calls for strengthening the relationship between the General Assembly and the other principal organs of the Organization to ensure better coordination on topical issues that require collective action by the United Nations, in accordance with their respective mandates.

Resolution 60/286 underlines the pivotal role of the General Assembly on global matters of concern to the international community, and at the same time sets out wide-ranging proposals to improve the role and authority of the General Assembly and its working methods.

Most recently, Member States have been engaged in interactive debates and concerted consultations on the contemporary work of the General Assembly, and adopted by consensus resolution 61/292, which again underscored the commitments to the revitalization agenda. In that connection, we are fully convinced that the upcoming report of the Secretary-General on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly will lead us further ahead in that ongoing process. We also look forward, Sir, to your leadership and guidance. In the meantime, my delegation wishes to share the following points.

Considering that the revitalization of the General Assembly constitutes one of the most essential elements of the comprehensive reform process of the United Nations and should therefore be accorded continued priority, my delegation notes with satisfaction that many measures have been taken by Member States and the Secretariat to implement relevant provisions of resolutions. Initial improvements have been made and should be extended on such critical fronts as periodic meetings between the Presidents of the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, and the holding of thematic debates during the Assembly's main sessions.

On another note, we share the views of many Member States that much remains to be done to enhance the role of the General Assembly, its presidency and its working methods; the selection and election process of the Secretary-General; as well as the effective implementation of the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly. Close cooperation and coordination between the General Assembly and other principal organs of the United Nations, other international institutions and civil society, as well as among the Main Committees and subsidiary bodies of the General Assembly, should be further consolidated in compliance with their respective functions and powers, thereby maximizing efficiency and avoiding duplication.

It is also a continued priority to rationalize and streamline the agenda of the General Assembly and review its mandates, taking into full account the core

interests and concerns of the larger membership, especially the developing countries, in the fields of international peace and security, development and human rights. Equally important, due attention should be paid to the consolidation of reports with a view to ensuring overall quality and reducing heavy burdens on Member States, in particular those represented by small delegations.

The revitalization of the General Assembly will be strengthened only when the general membership displays the political will and determination to enable the General Assembly to discharge its role and responsibility as envisaged in the Charter. Our efforts in that exercise must be guided by the principles of democracy, transparency and accountability. In that connection, my delegation believes that a working group on the revitalization of the General Assembly, as called for in resolution 61/292, should be established without delay, and that Member States should engage in in-depth discussions with an eye to identifying the appropriate and practical ways to move the revitalization process to fruition.

Finally, may I assure you, Sir, of Viet Nam's continued efforts to work with you and Member States in that important endeavour.

Mr. Takasu (Japan): I would like to express my appreciation to you, Sir, for convening today's meeting to discuss one of the most important agenda items, the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly.

The General Assembly, as the principal organ of the United Nations represented by every Member State equally, is mandated to take up any question or matter within the scope of the United Nations Charter. The General Assembly plays a central role in making decisions on and implementing United Nations reform. Under General Assembly resolutions, we have established the Peacebuilding Commission and the Human Rights Council, and have discussed such other important reform issues as Security Council reform and management reform.

We must perceive the revitalization and strengthening of the General Assembly as a vital issue that is geared to strengthening the functioning of the United Nations itself. I wish to discuss four points today that I think require priority attention.

First, I would like to encourage Member States to actively discuss in the General Assembly the most relevant and pressing issues of the day. In that respect, Japan extends its full cooperation and support to your initiatives, Sir, to hold major thematic debates and panel discussions in order to establish broad international understanding of current substantive issues of importance to Member States and to raise political attention and momentum. In that respect, we commend the good discussion at the High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development held in October, under your guidance. The debate on the report of the Security Council and the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council was also conducted in a constructive spirit from 12 to 14 November, with the participation of a large number of Member States. It has contributed to raising political momentum for the forthcoming intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform, under your leadership, and to producing concrete results during the current session. It will be another busy year for the General Assembly in 2008. Japan is fully committed to rendering its full support to the Panel's discussion on climate change to be held in February, as well as the meetings on management reform, counter-terrorism and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). We are prepared to actively participate in these meetings. However, thematic debates must be prepared carefully and well in advance, if they are to be useful and to achieve their intended objectives.

Secondly, Member States and the United Nations Secretariat must do their utmost to improve the work of the General Assembly and its decisions in order to make them more effective and constructive. Rationalizing the General Assembly's agenda and streamlining resolutions will help it to focus its work more on priority issues and to ensure that messages from the Assembly are action-oriented. Reducing the volume of documents submitted to the Assembly and combining some individual reports would help the Assembly to work more efficiently and effectively. These recommendations have been repeated many times in past General Assembly resolutions, but, so far, there is no marked improvement. The Secretariat should make concerted efforts to reduce the volume and cost of documentation.

Thirdly, in order to improve coordination among the principal organs of the United Nations, consultation among the leaders of those bodies — namely, the Presidents of the General Assembly, of the Security

Council, the Economic and Social Council and the Secretary-General himself, should be strengthened. We acknowledge the special efforts that the Secretary-General is making in this regard. We fully support the practice that Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon initiated to provide timely briefings to the General Assembly and to submit reports to it, if necessary, on specific issues. We also welcome the holding of regular meetings between the President of the Security Council and the President of the General Assembly to encourage consideration of issues of current international concern by the Assembly. Close working relations among the principal organs should be encouraged as a regular and continuous process.

My fourth point is on the implementation of the decision itself. I would like to stress the importance of the implementation of what has already been agreed by the General Assembly. Meaningful revitalization of the General Assembly is possible through the timely and effective implementation of the decisions and measures adopted. Implementation of General Assembly resolutions is critical to enhancing its credibility. At the same time, messages and requests by the General Assembly must be clear and precise for effective implementation. Mandates emerging from resolutions by the General Assembly should not be out-of-date or duplicated, nor should they contradict each other. Mandates should be revised regularly and streamlined to meet current requirements. Therefore, it is important that Member States agree to give fresh impetus to a committee on mandate review under the co-chairmanship of Ambassador Kaire Munionganda Mbuende of Namibia and Ambassador Rosemary Banks of New Zealand. An ad hoc working group on the revitalization of the General Assembly is also important in order to evaluate and assess the status of the implementation of relevant resolutions.

Japan looks forward to constructive discussion on this important agenda and to the achievement of concrete results in the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly.

Mr. Wenaweser (Liechtenstein): Mr. President, the topic under consideration today must be a priority issue for any President of the General Assembly. Strengthening the body over which you preside is both an obvious goal and a political necessity.

There is no doubt that the Assembly has, for a while now, not been playing the role foreseen for it under the United Nations Charter. This is a worrisome development, because a one-sided focus on the work of the Security Council is politically unhealthy and a threat to the institutional balance of this Organization.

We continue to see limited value in the now almost traditional exercise of negotiating some sort of comprehensive resolution on how to revitalize the General Assembly. The recent past, in particular, has made it quite clear that these efforts may produce some small political sparks and can also result in the consensual adoption of decisions and resolutions. They do not, however, bring about real political change. This is, in fact, not surprising. Why would a paradigm shift be created through an exercise that is, by and large, an expression of business-as-usual and thus of the political culture it is intended to change? Furthermore, the ad hoc committees and working groups mandated with the work on revitalization tend to produce texts of uncanny similarity and often lead to a repetition of the well-known statement that the problem of revitalizing the General Assembly is one of implementation or, more concretely, the lack thereof.

We do, of course, welcome the appointment this morning of our two colleagues from Poland and Paraguay, and we thank them for their willingness to take on this difficult task. Our suggestion would be that they should focus their work on perhaps just one aspect of revitalizing the General Assembly.

One key lesson from the past, to our mind, is the importance of leadership. This Assembly has been a politically more relevant body when headed by somebody who was willing to lead its activities and to give real guidance to the membership, on the basis, of course, of extensive consultations. Given the importance of the position of the President of the Assembly, it is quite remarkable that we do not pay more attention to the process of nominating and selecting our Presidents. It is clear, Mr. President, that not all of your predecessors knew this Organization as well as you do. In some instances, a newly elected President, after taking the helm of the Assembly, was quite surprised to find out what the position actually entailed. The presidency is not a protocol function; it is a position of leadership and political responsibility. We would, therefore, welcome consultations, under your overall guidance, conducted by the two co-Chairs, on how to improve the mechanisms through which the Assembly nominates and appoints its Presidents. There are a number of proposals from the past that we can

build on, relating to measures such as informal meetings with persons who have an interest in the position, through regional groups or otherwise, compilation of briefing material, and other means that can be drawn upon. If a concrete product on this issue was to be the only outcome under this item, we would consider it to be a good result.

In addition, of course, we wish to see a dynamic session of the Assembly under your leadership. We encourage you in particular to focus on the priority issues that you have outlined and to make frequent use of the format of informal plenary sessions. Such meetings might be even more useful and yield even more concrete results, if you present the members with a list of topics and questions that you wish them to address in connection with a particular issue. We also welcome briefings offered by the Secretary-General, such as the one given last week. We concur that such briefings should be held on specific opportunities, but we do not believe that these should arise exclusively in connection with travel activities. Also, we would welcome briefings that are more focused and limited to a small number of topics, perhaps even a single one. We also encourage you to organize similar opportunities with other high officials of the Secretariat, such as Under-Secretaries-General. Under-Secretaries-General, in particular, often complain about the lack of opportunity to engage with the membership, and informal plenary meetings are one obvious remedy.

Mr. Pokhrel (Nepal): On behalf of the delegation of Nepal, I appreciate the opportunity to discuss this important agenda item, on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly. In this regard, we commend your opening statement, Mr. President, and pledge Nepal's support in your endeavours in this regard. My delegation associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Algeria on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

We appreciate the call of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for a stronger United Nations for a better world. We cannot envisage a stronger United Nations without a strong and effective General Assembly. Therefore, the revitalization of the General Assembly is an important and unfinished item on the agenda of United Nations reform.

The General Assembly is the highest representative body of the United Nations. Its universal membership makes it the most authoritative policymaking organ of the United Nations. It is a matter of utmost priority for the membership of the United Nations that the General Assembly strengthen its deliberative, legislative and decision-making functions. Unless we strengthen these aspects, the General Assembly cannot be revitalized.

At the 2005 World Summit, world leaders called for revitalizing and strengthening the General Assembly; it is sad, however, that we have not been able to move forward in the revitalization of the General Assembly. Today, its functions are being encroached upon by other organs of the United Nations and taken over by bodies outside the Organization. Particularly worrisome is the increasing role of the Security Council in adopting resolutions of legislative nature, which would have otherwise required consideration by the General Assembly.

Revitalization of the Assembly can be achieved if we bring important subjects under its consideration. For example, the recent high-level event on climate change convened by the Secretary-General showed how much the Assembly can do to focus upon the world's most pressing issues. More such thematic debates on topical issues should be regularly convened in the Assembly.

Nepal supports the strengthening of the role of the Office of the President of the General Assembly and a more regular and institutionalized mechanism for consultations between the President and the heads of other organs of the United Nations. The President's Office should be backed with more resources.

We emphasize that we should strengthen the mechanism for implementing the decisions of the General Assembly. Similarly, we should be able to dispense with repetitive and obsolete mandates.

We welcome the continuation of the debate under this agenda item with the appointment of facilitators. Nepal pledges to work with other Member States to strengthen this important organ of the United Nations.

Mr. Amil (Pakistan): The Pakistan delegation would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this debate on General Assembly revitalization. We would like to align ourselves with the statement made by the representative of Algeria on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) in his capacity as coordinator of the NAM working group. Let me take this opportunity to thank the representatives of

San Marino and Senegal for their hard work during the sixty-first session. We welcome your appointment of the new co-Chairs, the representatives of Paraguay and Poland, who will help guide our future work.

We also look forward to constructively participating in the deliberations on this important issue at this, the sixty-second session. The result of our deliberations should accommodate the interests and concerns of all United Nations Member States. We believe that the issue of revitalization of the General Assembly is a political and not a procedural issue. Where divisions persist, our collective efforts should be for consensus-building.

Pakistan remains concerned that the role and effectiveness of the General Assembly, as clearly spelled out in the Charter, has been considerably and continually eroded. Furthermore, we continue to urge full implementation of the previous General Assembly resolutions on revitalization. For our work to yield real results, our consultations should be conducted in a manner that is open and transparent, treating the issues in a holistic manner.

Our work at the sixty-first session resulted in resolution 61/292, which was procedural in nature and which served a two-fold purpose: to request an update report from the Secretary-General on the status of implementation of resolution 60/286, and to establish an open-ended working group at the sixty-second session. Unfortunately, the requested report has not yet been made available to Member States. Nor has the Secretariat indicated a date for its release. Our consideration of the report will therefore have to take place at a later stage, in the framework of the Open-ended Working Group. We would like to here restate our desire to see a substantive report from the Secretary-General that is analytical in nature and that addresses why there has been a lack of implementation on the revitalization of the General Assembly.

The General Assembly is the chief deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations and must be enabled to play its central role effectively. In an increasingly globalized and interdependent world, multilateralism is not just desirable but also necessary. Against such a backdrop, the United Nations has a historic opportunity to play a lead role in world affairs, but it is seemingly failing to do so due to a lack of agreed vision among Member States.

Revitalization of the Assembly should therefore not be treated merely as a procedural issue relating to rationalization of agendas, curtailment of documentation and improvement of working methods. True revitalization of the General Assembly can occur only once the general membership shows the political determination to enable the Assembly to discharge its prescribed role and responsibility as envisaged by the Charter of the United Nations. Equally important is to arrest and reverse the erosion of the role and authority of the General Assembly, essentially by the Security Council and to a certain extent by the Secretariat.

For our delegation, the crux of revitalization is strengthening the authority and the role of the General Assembly. Prerequisites for achieving such an outcome necessitate, first, full respect for the Assembly's Charter role and functions; secondly, an end to the encroachment by the Security Council on issues within the Assembly's purview; thirdly, a renewed political commitment by all Member States to implement the Assembly's decisions on a non-selective and non-discriminatory basis; and finally, the provision of adequate financial resources to implement all mandated activities.

Some further ideas for consideration include the following. First, the General Assembly should be accorded a greater review and residuary role in peace and security, for example by reinvigorating historical procedures, such as "Uniting for Peace" (resolution 377 (v)), and addressing "ignored" issues relating to complex crises, including through the Economic and Social Council, the Peacebuilding Commission and other functional commissions.

Secondly, a General Assembly monitoring and implementation mechanism could be established to review and advise on the implementation of various decisions and recommendations adopted by the Assembly. This mechanism could be linked also to the mandate review exercise.

Thirdly, we would welcome regular briefings to the General Assembly by the Secretary-General.

Fourthly, the General Assembly should carry out closer examination of the deliberations and decisions of the Security Council.

Fifthly, it is clear, we believe, that the General Assembly's role in financial and administrative

management and oversight over all United Nations decisions and expenditures has to be bolstered.

We recognize that a key reason for the erosion of the Assembly's credibility and effectiveness is the non-implementation of its resolutions and decisions. We have in the past suggested the establishment of some form of mechanisms that can monitor the implementation of these resolutions. We would like to urge the membership to further explore this idea.

Last but not least, Pakistan supports efforts to strengthen the Office of the President of the General Assembly. We continue to recommend that the Secretary-General brief the President at least, perhaps, bi-monthly on all activities in the United Nations, particularly those of the Security Council. The President should also be authorized to request special briefings on any situation or issue by the Presidents of the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, and also by the Secretary-General. We recommend greater coordination in this area. In these endeavours, Pakistan will continue to work constructively so that the General Assembly's role as the principal deliberative, policymaking and most representative organ of the United Nations is restored.

Mr. Sow (Guinea) (*spoke in French*): An in-depth consideration of the ways and means to strengthen the role, authority, effectiveness and efficiency of the General Assembly is a central concern of States Members of our Organization. My delegation would like to express to you, Mr. President, our deepest appreciation for having given this item a due place on the agenda.

We would like to associate ourselves with the statement made by the representative of Algeria on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

I would like at the outset to commend the Working Group and, in particular, the two Facilitators for the sixty-first session, Ambassador Badji of Senegal and Ambassador Bodini of San Marino, for the productive and tireless efforts they made following March 2007 in conducting consultations, which led in August to the consensus adoption of resolution 61/292 on revitalizing the General Assembly.

In spite of the sensitive and complex nature of the subject, progress has been made, and my delegation welcomes it with interest. We cannot fail to welcome the increasingly central role the General Assembly is playing in the United Nations reform process and in the implementation of decisions stemming from conferences and summits of heads of State or Government. The result is the strengthening of cooperation and of balance between the General Assembly and the other principal organs, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and the Secretariat, on the basis of the mandates that the Charter confers to each of them.

The holding of major thematic debates promotes interaction and agreement among Member States on major or urgent questions of substance or of topicality, dealing with a wide range of areas, including prevention and management of crises, the Millennium Development Goals, terrorism, climate change, dialogue among cultures and religions, and others.

Likewise, the active involvement of non-governmental organizations, civil society and the private sector in the process of exchanging ideas strengthens the General Assembly as a universal representative body and the principal deliberative organ of our Organization. My delegation is also pleased to note the strengthening of cooperation between the General Assembly and national and regional parliaments, in particular through the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

These positive and encouraging aspects in the process of revitalizing the General Assembly should not hide the obstacles and challenges that remain to be overcome so that progress will be irreversible. In this effort, we should maintain a better balance between the action of the General Assembly and that of the Security Council, shielding the former from being trampled by the latter. Once again, we should call on the Security Council to keep the General Assembly updated and better informed on measures it adopts and periodically to present reports to the General Assembly for its consideration, under Articles 15 and 24 of the Charter, on specialized subjects relating to topical issues of concern to the international community.

The revitalization of the General Assembly also requires the strengthening of the Office of its President, as well as the enrichment and consolidation of its institutional memory. The Assembly must, inter alia, make available financial and human resources for carrying out its most pressing programmes and action items.

With respect to the improvement of the working methods of the General Assembly, my delegation would hope for steady continued work on reviewing and streamlining the agendas of the General Assembly and its Main Committees. The time has come for the General Committee, as the main adviser to the Assembly, to be reactivated so that it can make concise recommendations on the Assembly's working methods, in accordance with resolution 58/316.

All follow-up measures and reform proposals should be contemplated and adopted openly, transparently and in a results-oriented way, based on the Organization's priority themes and objectives.

In concluding, I would like to emphasize that the implementation of General Assembly resolutions is one of the keys to revitalization. Therefore, I appeal to the Secretariat to continue, for that purpose, to provide useful information on the status of implementation of resolutions adopted in this area, including by updating its excellent report (A/61/483) in conformity with the spirit of resolution 61/292 of 2 August 2007.

I welcome the choice of our colleagues from Poland and Paraguay as Facilitators of the Open-ended Working Group on revitalization of the General Assembly, and I assure them of our delegation's cooperation.

Mr. Natalegawa (Indonesia): Mr. President, we thank you for convening this debate on the orientation of the entity that best represents the aspirations of the global community of nations. We also express our gratitude to the Permanent Representatives of Senegal and San Marino for their important work as Facilitators on revitalizing the role and authority of the General Assembly.

My delegation supports efforts at revitalizing the General Assembly's role and authority. It associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Algeria on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Efforts at revitalizing the General Assembly should aim at strengthening its role as the principal deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations. While we appreciate the efforts to empower the General Assembly and increase its efficiency, the Assembly can be considered revitalized only when certain fundamental factors are properly addressed. The implementation of General Assembly resolutions is one obvious necessity. Strong efforts need to be made in that direction. Certainly, there is need for the full implementation of all previous General Assembly resolutions on revitalization as soon as possible.

Revitalization also entails the realignment of the complementary relations between the General Assembly and the Security Council in a spirit of partnership and in full respect of the two organs' Charter-mandated responsibilities. A revitalized General Assembly is also one that demonstrates a capacity to address important international issues proactively. The holding of thematic debates is a welcome development. It is also one that enhances substantive dialogue and cooperation with the Economic and Social Council in the interest of promoting synergies. The recently established Peacebuilding Commission and Human Rights Council need support and guidance from a revitalized Assembly in the fulfilment of their challenging tasks.

Political will is of the essence, and Member States have to demonstrate it tangibly by bringing about a strong General Assembly. Indonesia supports and urges the implementation of previous General Assembly resolutions on revitalization. We share the concern of other delegations that the role of the Assembly has diminished over the years and that it has to be restored in line with its Charter mandate. My delegation would support a new substantive and comprehensive resolution to that effect.

Moving forward, we believe that the Assembly should adopt more streamlined and action-oriented resolutions. We should plan and organize our work in the various committees efficiently, including focused discussions. Repetition and overlapping of mandates should be avoided. However, rationalization of the work should not be forgotten at the expense of substantive matters.

Indonesia reiterates its cooperation and support in undertaking a comprehensive and meaningful revitalization of the General Assembly.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.